

THE AMERICAN MUSEUM JOURNAL



FROM MURAL PANEL IN THE NORTH PACIFIC HALL

Volume XI

April, 1911

Number 4

Published monthly from October to May inclusive by
THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
NEW YORK CITY

ONE DOLLAR PER YEAR

FIFTEEN CENTS PER COPY

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The American Museum Journal

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MARY CYNTHIA DICKERSON, *Editor*

Subscription, One Dollar per year. Fifteen cents per copy

A subscription to the JOURNAL is included in the membership fees of all classes of Members of the Museum

Subscriptions should be addressed to the AMERICAN MUSEUM JOURNAL, 30 Boylston St., Cambridge, Mass., or 77th St. and Central Park West, New York City

Entered as second-class matter January 12, 1907, at the Post-office at Boston, Mass.
Act of Congress, July 16, 1894

SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS, 1910

The American Museum of Natural History

The scientific publications of the American Museum are issued in three series:

The *Bulletin* in which are published short articles embodying the results of the research work of the various departments of the Museum. These articles are less voluminous and of more general interest than those which appear in the *Memoirs*. The *Bulletin* was founded in 1881, and the number of volumes which have been issued is twenty-eight;

The *Memoirs* composed of special articles covering research requiring more exhaustive treatment. They have been published at irregular intervals since 1893. Ten complete volumes and parts of four others have been issued;

The *Anthropological Papers*, similar in character to the *Bulletin*, but devoted exclusively to the results of field work and other research conducted by the anthropological staff of the Museum. The publication of these papers was commenced in 1907, six volumes having been issued up to the present time.

The scientific publications for the year 1910 are as follows:

BULLETINS AND MEMOIRS

J. A. ALLEN, Editor

Bulletin XXVII The Orders of Mammals. By William K. Gregory. pp. $\frac{5}{2}$ 1-525, 32 text figures.

Bulletin XXVIII (Twenty-nine plates and 100 text figures)

Art. I — The Black Bear of Labrador. By J. A. Allen. pp. 1-6.

II — Mammals from the Athabaska-Mackenzie Region of Canada. By J. A. Allen. pp. 7-11.

III — Mammals from Palawan Island, Philippine Islands. By J. A. Allen. pp. 13-17.

IV — Description of a Skull and some Vertebrae of the Fossil Cetacean *Diochotichus vanbenedeni* from Santa Cruz, Patagonia. By Frederick W. True. pp. 19-32, pls. i-v.

V — On the Skull of *Aptenodius* and the Skeleton of a New Artiodactyl. By W. D. Matthew. pp. 33-42, pl. vi, 5 text figs.

VI — On the Osteology and Relationships of *Paramys*, and the Affinities of the Ischyromyidae. By W. D. Matthew. pp. 43-72, 19 text figs.

VII — On some Orthoptera from Porto Rico, Culebra and Vieques Islands. By James A. G. Rehn. pp. 73-77, 1 text fig.

VIII — Some Parasitic Hymenoptera from Vera Cruz, Mexico. By Charles T. Brues. pp. 79-85, 1 text fig.

IX — Additional Mammals from Nicaragua. By J. A. Allen. pp. 87-115.

- X — The North American Species of *Neuroterus* and their Galls. By William Beutenmüller. pp. 117-136, pls. viii-xiii.
- XI — The North American Species of *Aglax* and their Galls. By William Beutenmüller. pp. 137-144, pl. xiv.
- XII — Mammals from the Caura District of Venezuela, with Description of a New Species of *Chrolopterus*. By J. A. Allen. pp. 145-149.
- XIII — On the Genus *Presbytis* Esch., and 'Le Tarsier' Buffon, with Descriptions of Two New Species of *Tarsius*. By D. G. Elliot. pp. 151-154.
- XIV — A Note on *Siphostoma pelagicum* (Osbeck). By John Treadwell Nichols. pp. 155-157, 1 text fig.
- XV — A Note on the Identity of *Caranx forsteri* Cuvier and Valenciennes. By John Treadwell Nichols. p. 159.
- XVI — On Two New Blennys from Florida. By John Treadwell Nichols. p. 161.
- XVII — New or Little Known Reptiles and Amphibians from the Permian (?) of Texas. By E. C. Case, pp. 163-181, 10 text figs.
- XVIII — The Skeleton of *Pacilospondylus francisi*, a New Genus and Species of Pelycosauria. By E. C. Case. pp. 183-188, 3 text figs.
- XIX — Description of a Skeleton of *Dimetrodon incisurus* Cope. By E. C. Case. pp. 189-196, pls. xv-xix, 5 text figs.
- XX — A Comparison of the Permian Reptiles of North America with those of South Africa. By R. Broom. pp. 197-234, 20 text figs.
- XXI — Tertiary Faunal Horizons in the Wind River Basin, Wyoming, with Descriptions of New Eocene Mammals. By Walter Granger. pp. 235-252, pls. xx-xxiii, 6 text figs.
- XXII — The North American Species of *Aulacidea* and Their Galls. By William Beutenmüller. pp. 253-258, pls. xxiv-xxvi.
- XXIII — Three New Genera of Myrmicine Ants from Tropical America. By William Morton Wheeler. pp. 259-265, 3 text figs.
- XXIV — The Cretaceous Ojo Alamo Beds of New Mexico with Description of the New Dinosaur Genus *Kritosaurus*. By Barnum Brown. pp. 267-274, pls. xxvii-xxix, 7 text figs.
- XXV — Fossil Insects and a Crustacean from Florissant, Colorado. By T. D. A. Cockerell. pp. 275-288, 4 text figs.
- XXVI — The Phylogeny of the Felidae. By W. D. Matthew. pp. 289-316, 15 text figs.
- XXVII — Collation of Brisson's Genera of Birds with those of Linnaeus. By J. A. Allen. pp. 317-335.
- XXVIII — Observations on the Habits and Distribution of Certain Fishes taken on the Coast of North Carolina. By Russell J. Coles, pp. 337-348.

Memoir XII (Jesup North Pacific Expedition, Vol. VIII)

Part I — Chukechee Mythology. By Waldemar Bogoras. pp. 1-197.

Memoir XIII (Jesup North Pacific Expedition, Vol. IX)

Part I — The Yukaghir and the Yukaghirized Tungus. By Waldemar Jochelson. pp. 1-133, pls. i-vii, 1 map.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL PAPERS

CLARK WISSLER, Editor

Vol. IV. Part II — Notes Concerning New Collections. (Edited by Robert H. Lowie.) pp. 271-337, pls. iv-viii, 42 text figs.

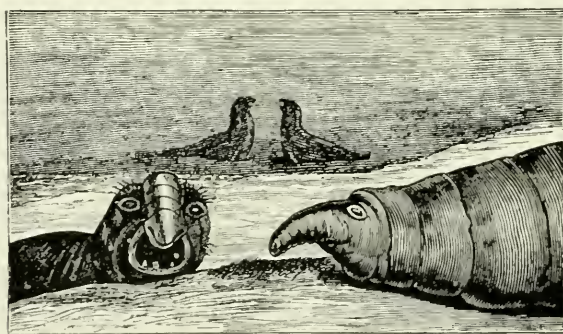
Vol. V. Part I — The Material Culture of the Blackfoot Indians. By Clark Wissler. pp. 1-176, pls. i-viii, 103 text figs.

Part II — Contribution to the Anthropology of Central and Smith Sound Eskimo. By Aleš Hrdlička. pp. 177-280, pls. xi-xxiii.

Vol. VI. Part I — The Archaeology of the Yakima Valley. By Harlan I. Smith. pp. 1-171, pls. i-xvi, 129 text figs.

Part II — The Prehistoric Ethnology of a Kentucky Site. By Harlan I. Smith. pp. 173-241, pls. xvii-lxiv, 1 text fig.

Other publications issued by the Museum are the *American Museum Journal* and the *Guide Leaflets*. All the above publications with the exception of the *Memoirs*, vols. VIII to XIV inclusive may be purchased from the Librarian of the Museum. Vols. VIII to XIV of the *Memoirs* are published by E. J. Brill, Leiden, Holland, and may be obtained through G. E. Stechert, Bookseller, 129 West 20th Street, New York City.



After Peron et Lescur. Paris, 1897

"SEA ELEPHANTS"

Comparison of this cut with the reproductions of photographs on pages 110 and 111 suggests something of the advance in accuracy zoölogical illustrative work has made in the past one hundred years

The American Museum Journal

VOL. XI

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No. 4.

RARE ELEPHANT SEALS FOR THE MUSEUM

REMINDEES OF AN EXTINCT MULTITUDE, A LOST INDUSTRY AND A LOST WEALTH
WHICH ARGUE FOR ADOPTION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF CONSERVATION

ON February 25 the Government steamer Albatross carrying an expedition commanded by Dr. Charles H. Townsend sailed from San Diego for work in deep sea dredging and for a scientific investigation of Guadalupe Island, which lies some two hundred and fifty miles off the coast south of San Diego. On March 6 the vessel was again in port at San Diego to send to the East news of the expedition's success, and certain valuable freight, as told in the following extract from Dr. Townsend's letter:

Our success at Guadalupe Island was quite beyond expectation. In addition to work on the birds and plants and various land collections of the island, we captured alive six sea elephants for the New York Aquarium and the Zoölogical Park and succeeded in getting four skins and two skeletons of adult sea elephants for the American Museum.

The three old males were monsters sixteen feet long, with proboscis as long as the head. We have one skull two feet long. We wound up the young seals in nets so tightly that we could handle them like bales. The skins of the old bulls were very heavy: each one flensed and salted was packed in a full-sized barrel which it completely fills and that without the skull.

When all was packed and ready, then the work really began, for we had to get our loads through a heavy surf to the ship. A single specimen made a load and the ship lay more than a mile away. We had four "upsets" but lost nothing. The series of photographs which we obtained are the only ones of the species in existence, and there are none published of the Antarctic species that show large males.

The ship is taking on coal and we are off to-morrow [to Cedros Island]. We came back only on account of the six young sea elephants. The six cases of live seals go by express; the seven barrels of skins and skeletons we are sending by freight.

The elephant seal is a "true" seal (*Phocida*), although in breeding habits and in the fact that the males greatly exceed the females in size, it resembles the sea lion and the fur seal as well as the walrus. There are two species, a southern (*Macrorhinus leoninus*) not found north of 35° south latitude and a northern (*M. angustirostris*) not found south of 24° north latitude. The two forms differ little in habits or in external features, the classification being based on skull structure. The long isolation of the northern and southern forms would make them valuable for the study of



Photograph by C. H. Townsend

ELEPHANT SEALS OR "SEA ELEPHANTS" ON GUADALUPE ISLAND (ADULT MALES)

Largest of all Pinnipeds, not excepting the walrus; maximum length of male 22 feet, female much smaller (as among eared seals). or "trunk" has the nostril openings at the end and can be expanded and erected at will. Females and immature seals lack a proboscis



Photograph by C. H. Townsend.

With proboscis erected, and mouth opened, revealing formidable teeth, the sea elephant sends forth guttural roars which carry for a considerable distance



Photograph by C. H. Townsend

The male sea elephants fight desperately — “beach-masters” the sealers in the Antarctic called them — and their necks and breasts bear evidence of many encounters

geographical distribution and its effects on species formation, if sufficient material could be brought together for the work; but sea elephants were nearly exterminated before exhaustive museum collections were made, so that specimens are now rare. The American Museum prior to 1911 had in its relatively large collection representative of the seals no single example of this species, but at just this time when word of the new material comes from the Pacific, the institution has gained possession of two skulls from Kerguelen Island in the Antarctic.¹

No better instance than the elephant seal can be given of the extermination of a species through the wastefulness and commercial greed of man, making clear the necessity of conservation as a principle directing human action. The elephant seal, unlike the fur seal, has a deep layer of blubber, sometimes six or seven inches thick, and the oil is superior even to whale oil. Elephant seals existed in vast numbers one hundred or more years ago and might still have been yielding a profitable industry. One has only to read the vivid descriptions by Captain Scammon, 1874, and by H. N. Moseley, Member of the Scientific Staff of the Challenger, 1879, to realize that here existed great wealth. Captain Scammon says of Heard's Island, "There were remains of thousands of skeletons. Bones lay in curved lines like long tide lines on either side of the plain above the beaches marking the rookeries of old time and tracks of the slaughter of the sealers."

The case is only several stages advanced beyond that of the fur seal. With the latter there is still the chance to handle the herds in a restricted industry and thus husband them until they can yield a larger industry without fear of loss of the species. Such must be in future the order for all industries dependent on wild animal life. For man has upon him at last the responsibility of knowledge, not only of the limitations of that life but also of the relative rapidity with which a species succumbs. By conservation, the era of strict economy in this line, as in others, will be delayed for coming generations, if not averted. Some species now approaching extinction can be restored through legislative protection and artificial breeding, some not yet endangered can be transplanted from continent to continent and domesticated; but no conservation is likely ever to make up for losses which have come through the actual extermination of whole races of animals of economic value. The elephant seal is only one of the many examples of extinct or nearly extinct fur-bearing or oil-producing animals or those of high food value, but it stands recorded in the world's history a scathing comment on the status of man's knowledge and of the development of his ethical sense in the nineteenth century.

M. C. D.

¹ Through the efforts of Mr. Frank K. Wood of New Bedford, Massachusetts.